

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action dated January 11, 2006. Because this response is mailed on June 12, 2006 with a two-month extension of time (June 11 being a Sunday), the amendment is timely filed.

I. Status of the Amendments

Prior to this amendment, claims 38, 39, 41-50, 64, 65, 67-101, and 104-106 were pending. By this amendment, claims 64, 65, 67-80 and 105 have been canceled without prejudice to refile, and claims 38, 41, 42, 81, and 106 have been amended. Consequently, claims 38, 39, 41-50, 81-101, 104, and 106 are presently pending.

Applicant previously paid for five independent claims and sixty-three total claims. Consequently, no fee is due.

II. Response to January 11 Office Action

In the January 11 Office Action, claims 38, 39, and 41-50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Additionally, claims 38, 39, 41-46, 81-84, 90-101, 104 and 106 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as allegedly unpatentable over Marnell (U.S. Patent No. 5,393,057) in view of Weingardt (U.S. Patent No. 5,482,289), claims 47-50 over Marnell in view of Weingardt, further in view of Tallarida (U.S. Patent No. 3,618,952), and claims 85-89 over Marnell in view of Weingardt, further in view of Baerlocher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,648,754). Applicant responds as follows.

In regard to the rejections of claims 38, 39, and 41-50 under section 112, claims 38, 41, and 42 have been amended. In regard to claim 38, the claim has been amended to recite the designation of a cell in the first group or the second group if the outcome generated is from the first set of outcomes or the second set of outcomes, respectively. In regard to claims 41 and 42, the antecedent basis issues have been resolved, without narrowing the scope of the claim thereby.

In regard to the rejections based on Marnell and Weingardt, applicant has amended independent claims 38, 81, and 106. Applicant addresses each independent claim in turn.

Claim 38 recites a method of facilitating play of a group game. The method includes, in each of a plurality of plays of individual games played by a plurality of players at respective gaming machines, generating an outcome for the individual game, the outcome being one of a plurality of outcomes including at least a first set of outcomes and a second set of outcomes. The method also includes displaying a first group of cells and an associated first value payout, each cell in the first group of cells capable of being designated with a designator in response to any player of the plurality of players achieving an outcome in the first set of outcomes, wherein the designator indicates the gaming machine at which the outcome in the first set of outcomes was generated, and designating a corresponding cell of the first group of cells with the designator responsive to an occurrence of any outcome from the first set of outcomes if the outcome generated for the individual game is from the first set of outcomes. The method further includes displaying a second group of cells and an associated second value payout while displaying the first group of cells and the associated first value payout, each cell in the second group of cells capable of being designated with the designator in response to any player of the plurality of players achieving an outcome in the second set of outcomes, wherein the designator indicates the gaming machine at which the outcome in the second set of outcomes was generated, the second group of cells being non-overlapping with the first group of cells, and designating a cell of the second group of cells with the designator responsive to an occurrence of any outcome from the second set of outcomes if the outcome generated for the individual game is from the second set of outcomes. The first value payout is provided if each of the cells in the first group of cells is designated, and the second value payout is provided if each of the cells in the second group of cells is designated, the first value payout associated with only the first group of cells and displayed in association with only the first group of cells and the second value payout associated with only the second group of cells and displayed in association with only the second group of cells.

In particular, as contrasted with claim 38 as previously presented, claim 38 now recites displaying an associated first or second value payout with the first or second group of cells. Claim 38 also recites that the claimed second group of cells is non-overlapping with the claimed first group of cells. Moreover, claim 38 now recites providing the first value payout if each of the cells in the first group of cells is designated and providing the second

value payout if each of the cells in the second group of cells is designated, the first value payout associated with only and displayed in association with only the first group of cells and the second value payout associated with only and displayed in association with only the second group of cells. These limitations distinguish the references relied upon by the examiner.

Initially, with reference to Marnell, it is noted that the allegedly corresponding display relied upon is a bingo-type sheet. As such, it is very much a question of random chance as to whether the allegedly corresponding first and second groups of cells will be non-overlapping, and certainly nothing is taught towards specific selection of non-overlapping groups of cells. Along similar lines, Weingardt, which is also relied upon regarding allegedly corresponding first and second groups of cells, is a bingo-type sheet; again, whether the allegedly corresponding first and second groups of cells will be non-overlapping is an issue of random chance, and nothing is taught to specifically select non-overlapping groups of cells. For example, the passage of Weingardt at col. 4:34-48 appears to suggest a wide range of potential combinations, many of which overlap.

Secondly, with reference to Marnell, it has previously been admitted "Marnell only has one value payout associated with the bingo matrix," and thus Marnell cannot disclose, teach or suggest a first payout associated with only and displayed in association with only the first group of cells and a second payout associated with only and displayed in association with only the second group of cells. As for Weingardt, it is recognized that col. 5:1-9 states:

Another alternative method of play using the bingo card 10 shown in FIG. 1 is to provide different payouts to the player depending on what locations of the bingo card 10 are used to form the winning combinations. In the preferred embodiment described above in column 26, column 27, row 36 and row 37 are shaded in the color red and the remaining rows and columns are shaded in the color white, a player could be paid a higher payout if he achieved an "all red" bingo instead of a mixed red and white bingo

However, as is the case with Marnell, Weingardt lacks the claimed one-to-one correspondence between the allegedly corresponding group of cells and the allegedly corresponding payout and its display (which appears to be missing altogether in the case of the allegedly corresponding payout value). Even in this passage from Weingardt, column 5,

there are many, many groups associated with the allegedly corresponding first payout, and at least four groups associated with the allegedly corresponding second payout.

Consequently, it is submitted that neither Marnell nor Weingardt, whether taken individually or in combination, discloses, teaches or suggest each and every limitation of the claimed invention. Moreover, because claims 39 and 41-50 depend from claim 38, and the rejections of these claims rely on the application of Marnell in combination with Weingardt relative to claim 38, it is believed these claims are also allowable.

Claim 81 recites a group gaming method. The method includes receiving wagers from a plurality of players at respective gaming machines, and determining outcomes of individual games played by the plurality of players at the respective gaming machines. The method also includes displaying an image representative of a group game played by the plurality of players at the respective gaming machines, wherein the image representative of the group game comprises a first plurality of cells and a first value payout corresponding to a first group goal and a second plurality of cells and a second value payout corresponding to a second group goal, wherein each cell of the first plurality of cells and the second plurality of cells is attributable to any of the respective gaming machines of the plurality of players and the second group of cells is non-overlapping with the first group of cells. For each outcome from a first set of outcomes, a cell of the first plurality of cells is designated with a designation indicative of the respective gaming machine at which the outcome from the first set of outcomes was determined, and for each outcome from a second set of outcomes, a cell of the second plurality of cells is designated with a designation indicative of the respective gaming machine at which the outcome from the second set of outcomes was determined. The method also includes providing a first value payout if the first group goal is achieved through designation of each of the first plurality of cells, the first value payout associated with only the first plurality of cells, providing a second value payout different from the first value payout if the second group goal is achieved through designation of each of the second plurality of cells, the second value payout associated with only the second plurality of cells, and displaying the first value payout in association with only the first group of cells and the second value payout in association with only the second group of cells.

In particular, claim 81 recites displaying a first plurality of cells and a first value payout corresponding to a first group goal, and a second plurality of cells and a second value payout corresponding to a second group goal. The second group of cells is non-overlapping with the first group of cells. Moreover, claim 81 recites that the first group goal is achieved through designation of each of the first plurality of cells, the first value payout associated with only the first plurality of cells, the second group goal is achieved through designation of each of the second plurality of cells, the second value payout associated with only the second plurality of cells, and the first value payout is displayed in association with only the first group of cells and the second value payout is displayed in association with only the second group of cells. Given the similarity between these limitations and those of claim 38 highlighted above, it is submitted that the arguments raised above relative to claim 38 should apply similarly to claim 81.

Consequently, it is further submitted that neither Marnell nor Weingardt, whether taken individually or in combination, discloses, teaches or suggest each and every limitation of the claimed invention. Moreover, because claims 82-101 and 104 depend from claim 81, and the rejections of these claims rely on the application of Marnell in combination with Weingardt relative to claim 81, it is believed these claims are also allowable.

Claim 106 recites a group gaming system. The system includes a plurality of gaming machines, each gaming machine of the plurality of gaming machines including a gaming machine controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to the processor, the gaming machine controller configured to receive a respective wager from a respective player, display a respective image representative of a respective individual game played by the respective player, determine a respective outcome of the respective individual game, the respective outcome of the respective individual game from a plurality of possible outcomes, provide at least a portion of a value payout associated with a group game. The system also includes a display device communicatively coupled to the plurality of gaming machines, the display device comprising a display screen operatively coupled to a display device processor, the display device processor configured to display an image representative of a group game played by the plurality of players at the respective gaming machines, wherein the image representative of the group game comprises a first plurality of cells and a first value payout corresponding to a first group goal and a second plurality of cells and a

second value payout corresponding to a second group goal, wherein each cell of the first plurality of cells and the second plurality of cells is attributable to any of the respective gaming machines of the plurality of players and the second plurality of cells is non-overlapping with the first plurality of cells, wherein a first value payout is associated with achieving the first group goal through designation of each of the first plurality of cells and is associated with only and displayed with only the first plurality of cells, and wherein a second value payout different from the first value payout is associated with achieving the second group goal through designation of each of the second plurality of cells and is associated with only and displayed with only the second plurality of cells. For each outcome from a first set of outcomes, a cell of the first plurality of cells is designated with a designation indicative of the respective gaming machine at which the outcome from the first set of outcomes was determined, and for each outcome from a second set of outcomes, a cell of the second plurality of cells is designated with a designation indicative of the respective gaming machine at which the outcome from the second set of outcomes was determined.

In particular, claim 106 recites display of the first plurality of cells and the first value payout corresponding to the first group goal, and the second plurality of cells and the second value payout corresponding to the second group goal. The second plurality of cells is non-overlapping with the first plurality of cells. Additionally, claim 106 recites a first value payout is associated with achieving the first group goal through the designation of each of the first plurality of cells and is associated with only and displayed with only the first plurality of cells, and a second value payout different from the first value payout is associated with achieving the second group goal through the designation of each of the second plurality of cells and is associated with only and displayed with only the second plurality of cells. Given the similarity between these limitations and those of claim 38 highlighted above, it is submitted that the arguments raised above relative to claim 38 should apply similarly to claim 106.

Claims 68-70 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Further, claims 64, 65, 67, 69, 71-73, 75, 76, 79, 80 and 105 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Marnell, and claims 68, 70, 77, and 78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103 as allegedly unpatentable over Marnell. However, because these claims have been canceled, the rejections are now moot.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above application is in condition for allowance, and reconsideration is respectfully requested. If there is any matter that the Examiner would like to discuss, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below. In any event, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith to our Deposit Account No. 13-2855, under Order No. 29757/AG42.

Dated: June 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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